

NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR
ABORTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 3, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act.

House Republicans are waging a war against women and they have made their extreme and dangerous agenda clear—to undermine women's access to reproductive health care.

H.R. 3 is a radical attack on women and their reproductive rights. It extends unprecedented limitation on access to abortions, and it singles out and punishes women who want access to this legal service.

Do not be confused. H.R. 3 goes far beyond current law—which is already highly restrictive, and which I oppose. The Hyde Amendment already prohibits women enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare, federal employees, women serving in the military, women in federal prisons, Peace Corps volunteers, and women seeking care under the Indian Health Services Act from getting the care they need. Its very narrow exceptions do not even give women facing severe health conditions like cancer access to medically necessary abortion care so they can receive chemotherapy treatment.

One of the original goals of this legislation was to narrow the already harmful Hyde exceptions even further. The bill's sponsors tried to redefine rape and incest—to take us back to a time when saying “no” wasn't enough. Public outcry at this mean-spirited and hurtful attempt to make it harder for survivors of rape and incest to access coverage for abortion services forced its removal. Unfortunately, based on the House Judiciary Committee Report accompanying H.R. 3, some members of this chamber are still intent on narrowing the rape exception.

This bill is both hurtful and offensive. H.R. 3 expands an unfair, punitive policy that is dangerous to women's health and applies it to millions of women and men in the private insurance market. No one should be limited in terms of their access to safe and legal abortion.

This legislation redefines the concept of “government funding” far beyond the current common understanding. It prohibits even private and nonfederal government funds from being spent on any activity remotely related to the provision of abortion—any time federal money is involved in funding or subsidizing other, nonabortion-related care.

This legislation increases taxes on small businesses with abortion coverage in their private insurance plans. For decades, small businesses have been fighting insurance company premium demands and struggling to maintain health insurance coverage for their employees. Many of those small businesses—1 in 3—are owned by women, but this bill affects both men and women.

The Affordable Care Act provides small businesses with tax credits to help make health insurance both accessible and affordable. Those tax credits are available now. Today, they are worth up to 35 percent of health insurance premium costs. By 2014, they will be worth up to 50 percent.

The Republicans have already passed legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act—taking away tax credits from small business owners and employees who need help. Repeal is bound to fail. But H.R. 3 takes another course—it would repeal this benefit for any small business insurance policy that includes coverage of abortions.

Small business owners will face an unfair and discriminatory choice. If they need the tax credit to make coverage for themselves and their employees affordable, they will need to drop the abortion benefit. If they want to keep the benefit, they will have to go without the tax credit—raising their costs and taking away money that could be used to expand their business and maybe hire another employee. H.R. 3 will raise taxes on millions of small businesses.

Nearly 90 percent of private health insurance policies offer abortion coverage and this is a blatant attempt to force employers to drop abortion coverage from their private health insurance plans.

Now is the time to work on the issues that are most important to Americans—creating jobs and improving the economy—rather than punishing small businesses and workers through legislation that takes health care away from women.

American women will suffer if this bill becomes law.

RECOGNIZING HELEN SPIVEY

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 10, 2011

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Helen Spivey who today is receiving the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2010 Regional Director's Conservation Award.

I had the distinct pleasure and honor to serve and sit next to Helen in the Florida House of Representatives, and I am proud that her many years of service yielded such tremendous benefits to the people of Florida and our state's unique ecosystem. Her recognition today is warranted and well deserved.

For several decades, Helen Spivey has been an iconic leader in the protection of Florida's special ecosystems and in particular, the endangered Florida manatee. For that work, she holds a very special title to those of us that know her well—“The Manatee Lady.”

For decades, Helen has fought to preserve the more pristine and natural Florida she knew in her youth. Since moving to Crystal River in the 1970s, she has built a long resume volunteering in efforts to fight uncontrolled urban growth, pollution from wastewater facilities, and of course to protect Florida manatees.

From serving on the Crystal River City Council to being elected to the Florida Legislature, Helen's life exemplifies the best a citizen has to offer as an active and effective community and public servant.

While she has worked in collaboration with many conservation organizations over her lifetime, her connection to the Save the Manatee Club is special.

Since 2000, she has served as co-chair of the Save the Manatee Club's Board of Directors. In this role, she works tirelessly for the gentle creature of our Florida waterways. The

Club could not have a better advocate for their efforts.

Today, the Fish and Wildlife Service is honoring Helen for her work on expanding the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge to include the critically important Three Sisters Springs property.

This project is a microcosm of Helen's long fight to protect Florida's incredible natural wonders and to protect much needed habitat for the Florida Manatee.

Three Sisters is an urban spring that has been under threat of development for many years. But through Helen's leadership, this 57-acre property was acquired by the Service to forever preserve this ecologically important habitat.

Each year, more than 150 manatees winter in and around this spring, and it draws tourists from across the state and beyond to behold this gentle giant of our waterways. If you have ever experienced a Florida manatee up close, you understand how special this creature is, and how important it is that we protect this impressive species for future generations.

The Three Sisters project took many years to realize and required the collaboration of many public and private partners. I was honored to work with Helen and with Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite of Brooksville, Florida, and Florida's senior Senator BILL NELSON to help secure federal funding for a portion of this important project.

But it was Helen that was the driving force that made the Three Sisters Springs Project a reality. She worked tirelessly to coordinate state, local and federal agencies, and the private partners needed to line up all the funding required to protect this precious resource. She has never been someone to take “no” for an answer, and with her bright spirit and intellect, she constantly wins over new allies for her cause.

Now that the spring's site is under federal management, I look forward to its full restoration and the inclusion of an interpretive platform and station that will enhance visitors' appreciation for this special ecosystem.

Once again, Helen should be very proud, as we are, of her hard fought victory for Florida's ecosystem and for the Florida manatee.

But I know what Helen will actually do . . . which is to smile, give us all a small nod, and then get right back to work on her next endeavor.

In a 2004 article in the St. Petersburg Times, Helen was quoted as saying, “I guess I wouldn't want people to remember me . . . but I would be really pleased if they could see an ecosystem that functions and a world that is not asphalt and concrete.”

Well, Helen, we will most certainly remember you and the work you continue to do each day to make your vision a reality.

And with your work regarding saving Three Sisters Spring, you have added one more special ecosystem to the list of protected places in our beloved Florida. I am thrilled that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is honoring you today—because no one is more deserving of this recognition.

So today, as you receive this award while also celebrating your eighty-third birthday, Florida thanks you for all that you do. I am so proud of you and simply can't wait to see what you accomplish in your next eighty-three years.